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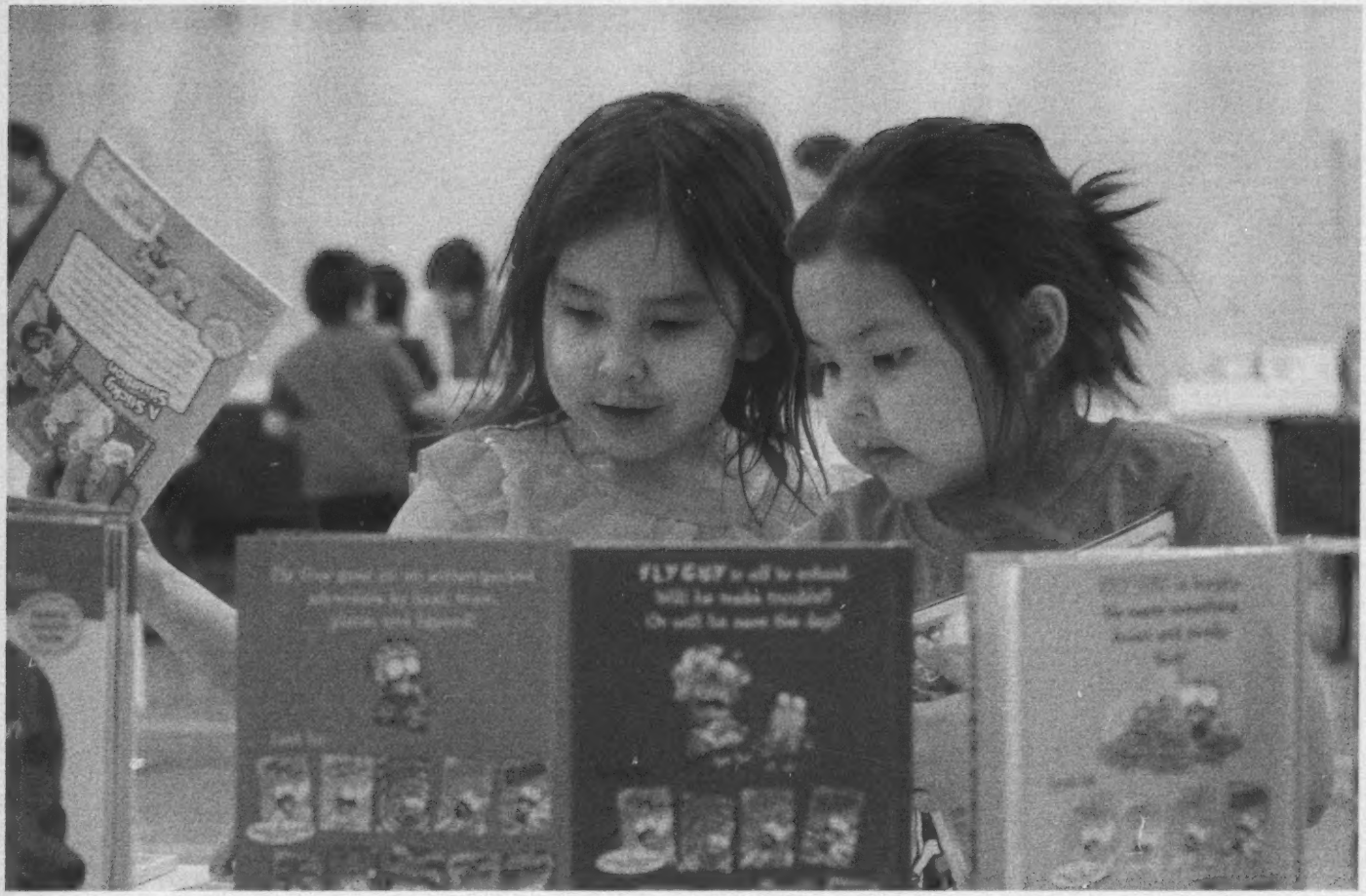

The Office of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Commissioner Annual Report

◆ 2013-2014

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

Si vous voulez ces informations en français, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

TŁĮCHǪ YATI K'ĘĘ. DI WEGODI NEWǪ DÈ, GOTS'O GONEDE.

Tłı̨chǫ

ʔERIHTŁ'ÍS DËNE SÚŁINÉ YATI T'A HUTS'ELKËR
XA BEYÁYATI THEʔĄ ʔAT'E, NUWE TS'ËN YÓŁTI.

Chipewyan

EDI GONDI DEHGÁH GOT'ĮE ZHATIÉ K'ÉĘ́
EDATŁ'ÉH ENAHDDHĘ NIDE.

South Slavey

K'ÁHSHÓ GOT'ĮNE XƏDǾ K'É HEDERI
ʔEDĮHTL'É YERINIWĘ NÍDÉ DÚLE.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vat'atr'ijąhch'uu zhit
yinohthan jì', diits'àt ginohkhìi.

Gwich'in

UVANITTUAQ ILITCHURISUKUPKU INUVIALUKTUN, QUQUAQLUTA.

Inuvialuktun

ᑕᒃᑯᐊ ᑎᑎᖅᑲᐃᑦ ᐱᓕᒍᒧᑦ ᐃᓄᒃᑎᑐᓪᓗᓂᒃ,
ᐅᓪᓚᑦᑎᓐᓄᑦ ᐅᖅᓯᓪᓕᖅᑐᓄᑐᑎᑦ

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

1-(867)-920-6500

October 1, 2014

The Honourable Speaker
Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories
Legislative Assembly Building
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to Section 23(1) of the *Official Languages Act*, I am pleased to submit to the Legislative Assembly, for consideration, the Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for the fiscal year 2013-2014.

Sincere Regards,

Snookie Catholique
Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories

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RÉSUMÉ

Le présent rapport annuel fait état du budget, des activités, des observations et des recommandations de la commissaire aux langues officielles des Territoires du Nord-Ouest pour l'exercice 2013-2014. Le rapport complet a été soumis à l'Assemblée législative des Territoires du Nord-Ouest pour examen et considération par les députés, conformément au paragraphe 23(1) de la *Loi sur les langues officielles* des TNO. Ce résumé présente quelques-uns des points saillants du rapport annuel.

BUDGET

Le budget 2013-2014 du Bureau de la commissaire aux langues officielles, comme mentionné dans le budget principal des dépenses, était de 248 000,00 $. Les dépenses du bureau se sont élevées à 191 178,59 $. Le Bureau de la commissaire aux langues officielles a donc terminé l'exercice 2013-2014 avec un excédent de 56 821,41 $.

ACTIVITÉS

La commissaire aux langues officielles a été nommée en décembre 2013. Depuis, plusieurs activités ont été entreprises pour promouvoir la reconnaissance des droits des locuteurs de nos langues officielles ainsi que du statut et des privilèges dont jouit chacune de ces langues. Ces activités avaient aussi comme objectif de rappeler aux entités qui ont des obligations en vertu de la *Loi sur les langues officielles* qu'elles doivent respecter cette loi d'une façon conforme à son esprit et à son intention.

Le Bureau de la commissaire aux langues officielles a reçu quatre plaintes par écrit et huit plaintes formulées par téléphone en lien avec les langues officielles, plaintes auxquelles la commissaire a donné suite. Ces plaintes ont été déposées par des citoyens des régions du Slave Nord, du Slave Sud et du Dehcho. Elles portaient sur des aspects législatifs, sur des services du secteur privé et des services du secteur public.

Outre le souci de réagir rapidement à des préoccupations précises concernant des langues officielles, beaucoup d'efforts ont été déployés pour faire en sorte que le Bureau de la commissaire soit ouvert et accessible aux Ténois. De nouveaux locaux abritent maintenant le bureau de la commissaire à Yellowknife, et on a entrepris de mettre sur pied un nouveau site Web. Enfin, nous avons profité de chaque occasion pour favoriser une meilleure connaissance des droits en matière de langues officielles ainsi que du rôle de la commissaire aux langues officielles. Cette dernière a en effet participé à de nombreux événements communautaires pour partager de l'information et en apprendre davantage au sujet des onze communautés de langues officielles des Territoires du Nord-Ouest.

PRINCIPAUX ENJEUX OBSERVÉS

Le rapport annuel expose plusieurs observations importantes faites par la commissaire aux langues officielles dans le courant de l'exercice 2013-2014. Ces enjeux ont d'ailleurs inspiré les recommandations soumises cette année à l'Assemblée législative.

1. Selon des analyses réalisées à partir des données du recensement de 2011 de Statistique Canada, le français et les langues autochtones montrent des signes de déclin aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest. Bien que nous ayons une bonne idée générale des raisons à l'origine de cette situation, il nous faudrait des renseignements complets et à jour pour déterminer quels facteurs contribuent le plus à la perte de vitalité de ces langues, et comment il est possible d'en atténuer les répercussions.

2. L'offre active de services dans les diverses langues officielles est une condition préalable à un système fonctionnel de programmes et de services en langues officielles. Même si le gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest a fait de grands progrès sur certains plans, notamment dans les services et les communications destinés au public, le mécanisme d'offre active doit être amélioré.

3. Étant donné son statut d'organisme indépendant, le Bureau de la commissaire aux langues officielles est bien placé pour apporter, sous forme de perspectives éclairées, sa contribution au dialogue sur les langues officielles. Par conséquent, cet organisme gagnerait à être suffisamment soutenu afin que son mandat soit exécuté efficacement.

4. L'état de l'étude ou de la mise en œuvre de bon nombre de recommandations formulées auprès de l'Assemblée législative est peu clair. Or, des particuliers, des collectivités et des institutions ont besoin de savoir à quoi s'en tenir afin de définir des orientations propices à une meilleure vitalité linguistique de toutes les communautés de langues officielles de notre territoire.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Ce rapport annuel présente quatre recommandations aux députés de l'Assemblée législative à des fins d'examen. Voici, de façon résumée, la teneur de ces recommandations :

1. L'Assemblée législative devrait lancer un appel au gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest pour qu'il organise un symposium sur les langues en 2016. Ce symposium nous aiderait à comprendre les facteurs qui influent sur la vitalité de nos langues officielles et à nous guider dans nos efforts pour ralentir le transfert linguistique.

2. Il faut promouvoir la mise en place d'un système efficace et universellement accessible d'offre active de services et de communications en diverses langues officielles.

3. Il faut allouer des fonds suffisants pour l'embauche du commissaire aux langues officielles, mais aussi pour deux autres personnes à temps plein, de façon que l'on puisse répondre dans les meilleurs délais aux plaintes, aux questions et aux demandes de renseignements du public. La création d'une bibliothèque spécialisée en ressources langagières doit aussi être soutenue.

4. L'Assemblée législative doit prendre la mesure de toutes les recommandations qui lui ont été soumises au cours des cinq dernières années en ce qui concerne les langues officielles et faire état des mesures prises à l'égard de chacune de ces recommandations.

La mise en œuvre des recommandations précitées fera l'objet d'un suivi au cours du prochain exercice; nous présenterons un compte rendu de ce suivi dans le prochain rapport annuel.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report presents the budget, activities, observations and recommendations of the Official Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. The following report has been submitted to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories for review and consideration by its members pursuant to Section 23(1) of the *Official Languages Act*. This Executive Summary captures several of the highlights of this Annual Report.

BUDGET

The 2013-2014 budget for the Office of the Official Languages Commissioner as indicated in the Main Estimates was $248,000.00. The expenditures of the Office totaled $191,178.59. The Office ended the 2013-2014 fiscal year with a surplus of $56,821.41.

ACTIVITIES

The Official Languages Commissioner was appointed in December 2013. Since this time, several activities were undertaken to further the recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the Official Languages and to ensure that those with obligations under the *Official Languages Act* comply with its spirit and intent.

The Office of the Official Languages Commissioner received and addressed four written complaints an eight language-related inquiries via telephone. These communications originated from the North Slave South Slave and Dehcho Regions. They related to legislation, private sector services and public sector services.

Beyond ensuring responsiveness to specific Official Language concerns, much work was done to ensure an open and accessible Office. A new office space was obtained in Yellowknife and development was initiated on a new website. Finally, every opportunity was taken to promote awareness of Official Language rights and the role of the Languages Commissioner. The Languages Commissioner participated in many community events to share information and to learn about the Northwest Territories' eleven Official Language communities.

KEY ISSUES OBSERVED

This Annual Report outlines several key observations the Languages Commissioner made over the course of the 2013-2014 fiscal year. These issues guide the recommendations placed before the Legislative Assembly in this report.

1. According to analyses of the 2011 census data from Statistics Canada, French and Aboriginal languages are showing signs of degradation in the Northwest Territories. While we have a general sense of why this is occurring, thorough and up-to-date information is needed to determine which factors are most corrosive and how to mitigate these effects.

2. Active offers of services in the Official Languages are conditions precedent to a functioning system of official languages programs and services. While the Government of the Northwest Territories has made great strides in some areas of services to and communications with the public, active offer systems should be improved.

3. Because of its independence, the Languages Commissioner is positioned to contribute valuable perspectives to the dialogue on Official Languages. The Office of the Official Languages Commissioner should be adequately supported so that this function may be effectively executed.

4. The status of the consideration and/or implementation of many of the recommendations that have been placed before the Legislative Assembly is unclear. Individuals, communities and institutions require this information in order to chart a course for better linguistic health for all Official Languages communities in the NWT.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This Annual Report presents four recommendations to the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their consideration. The following are summaries of those four recommendations:

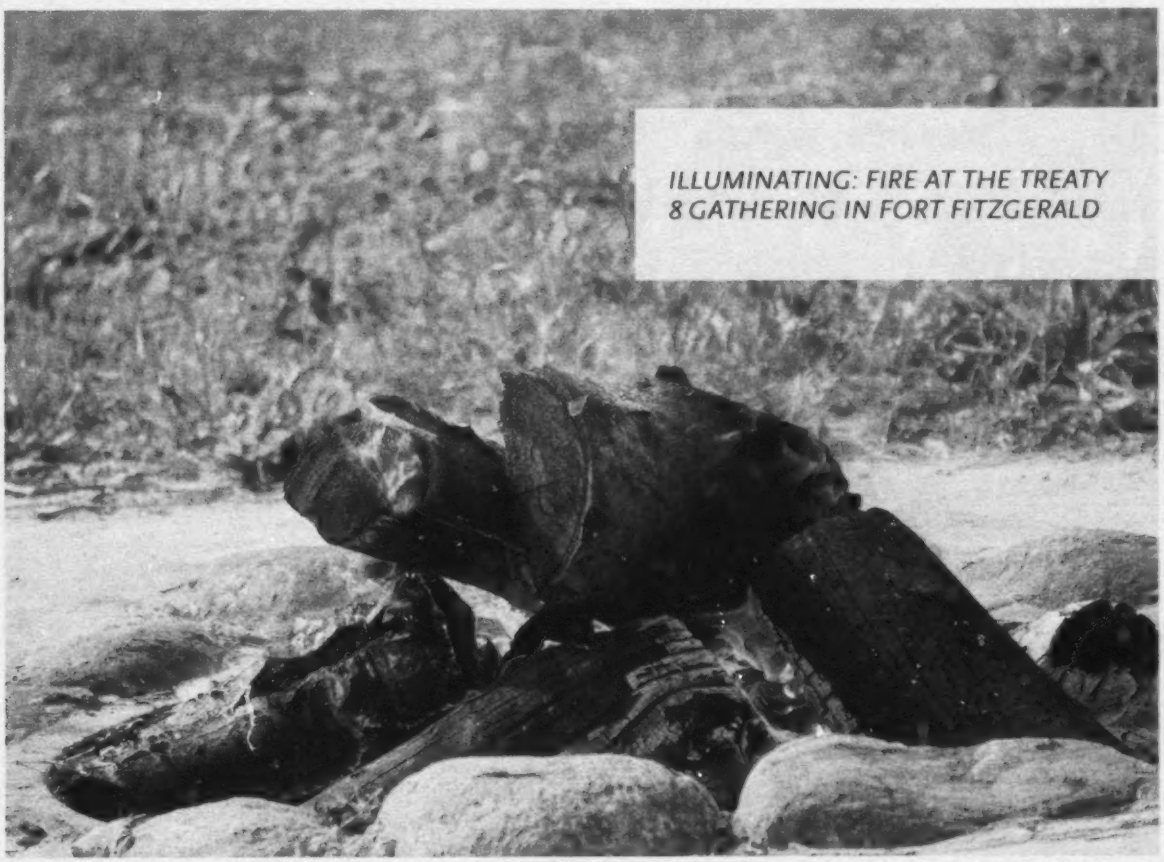
1. The Legislative Assembly should urge the Government of the Northwest Territories to convene a Languages Symposium to be held in 2016. This will help us understand which factors are impacting the health of our Official Languages and guide all of us in our effort to slow language shift.

2. The institution of an effective and universally accessible system for the active offer of services and communications in the relevant Official Languages should be promoted

3. Sufficient funds should be allocated to employ a Languages Commissioner and two staff persons on a full-time basis so that complaints, inquiries and requests for information from the public may be responded to in a timely way. The creation of a library dedicated to language resources should also be supported.

4. The Legislative Assembly should take stock of the Official Language-related recommendations submitted to it over the last five years and report on the treatment of each one.

The implementation of these recommendations will be monitored over the next fiscal year and reported upon in the next Annual Report.



ILLUMINATING: FIRE AT THE TREATY 8 GATHERING IN FORT FITZGERALD

MESSAGE FROM THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

On this 30th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act*, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Official Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. This is my first Annual Report.

Since my appointment as Official Languages Commissioner in December 2013, I have been impressed by the passion that people across the Northwest Territories have for their languages. I am most honoured and proud to be part of our collective project of preserving, developing and enhancing our Official Languages. I would like to thank the members of the Legislative Assembly for believing in me, for continuing to invest in this Office and for their commitment to the health of our Official Languages.

The *Official Languages Act* is a cornerstone of the Official Languages structure in this jurisdiction. In my view, under this statute the Official Languages Commissioner serves as a connector. My role is to connect individuals with their language rights and, though certain processes, with the government institutions that give effect to these rights. It is also to connect government institutions with the concerns of the rights holders that they govern. In order to fulfill this purpose, my office must maintain open lines of communication with the public, with government institutions and with the law makers.

While this sounds simple, in a place the size of the NWT, it is no easy task. In addition to our vast geography, the lines of communication available to us, such as social media, have rapidly expanded. Similarly, the speed at which information is exchanged has increased dramatically. Some have adopted these new modes as their principal means of communicating. Others continue to use more traditional modes. Both have important things to contribute to our lives. During my brief tenure, it has become readily apparent that in order to connect people, rights and institutions, the Languages Commissioner's Office must embrace this new world of communications while remaining available for in-person meetings and discussions over the telephone.

> "While the decision to learn and use a language does, ultimately rest with the individual, the opportunity to use a language often depends on the seller, service provider, teacher and employer."

As a first order of business, we have opened a new office space in Yellowknife that will provide a welcoming environment for members of the public to ask questions and consult material relating to their language rights. We have also begun to develop a new website that will be accessible to all Official Language communities in innovative ways. In parallel, we have begun to develop a process around the use of social media so that we can reach users of this technology across the NWT, Canada and the world. In order to do this right, in order to provide the same level of service as our sister jurisdictions, we will need the proper resources and we will need to use those resources effectively.

People throughout the NWT have imagined a day where Aboriginal and French Languages are used extensively, on a daily basis, to communicate in NWT homes and communities, as well as within the organizations and agencies providing the services to the public. This vision was the keynote for Northwest Territories Aboriginal Languages Plan, which was generated from the input of over 300 residents. Importantly, this vision is not merely a destination point. This vision is an organizing principle for our work today.

I studied with interest the most recent Annual Report on Official Languages. I am encouraged by the initiatives and the ideas represented there. The emphasis on services in all Official Languages is fundamental to achieving the spirit and intent of the Act. While the decision to learn and use a language does, ultimately rest with the individual, the *opportunity* to use a language often depends on the seller, service provider, teacher and employer. These interactions, for better or worse, shape our world and impact what we discuss in the home.

Initiatives like the 14 single-window service centres across the NWT are a good start. The use of enjoyable and accessible media to advise different language communities about available services, such as *On the Air* and *Bear Facts*, is also commendable. Community Health Representatives and their efforts to help bridge linguistic and cultural communication barriers are absolutely essential and must be active everywhere that health services are provided. Ongoing adequate support for the Francophone Affairs Secretariat is essential.

We should remember that programs must, in the end, be effective for people. Part of ensuring these programs actually reach residents is letting them know they exist. Active offers of services in the Official Languages are essential to this. They are gateways to the entire rights framework. Another part of this is proper evaluation. Beyond reports that list what has been done, we need an assessment of the impact these are having on language shift. I include several recommendations at the end of this Annual Report, which I believe will assist in achieving a real impact.

The door of the Office is officially open to the Minister Responsible for Languages and any other public official or member of the public who wishes to discuss the work being done pursuant to language-related initiatives including the Aboriginal Languages Plan or the Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services. Such dialogue would give life to the collaboration and cooperation between organizations and governments envisioned in these policy documents and help us all move toward fulfilling the intent and purpose of the *Official Languages Act*.

I would like to close my first message with a note of appreciation to all those who have helped guide me through these early days of my term. My staff has worked tirelessly to ensure our office space is efficient, effective and welcoming. The staff of the Legislative Assembly has provided timely and thoughtful administrative and logistical support to the Office so that I have been able to focus on fulfilling my duties as Commissioner. Finally, several residents have taken the time to communicate their concerns, to ask me questions and to teach me about their languages and cultures. These committed individuals have demonstrated with acute clarity the relationship between the health of our language and the overall health of our families and communities. This has inspired me to work hard every day. Thanks to all of you for your continued commitment to our Official Languages.

Mahsi Cho.

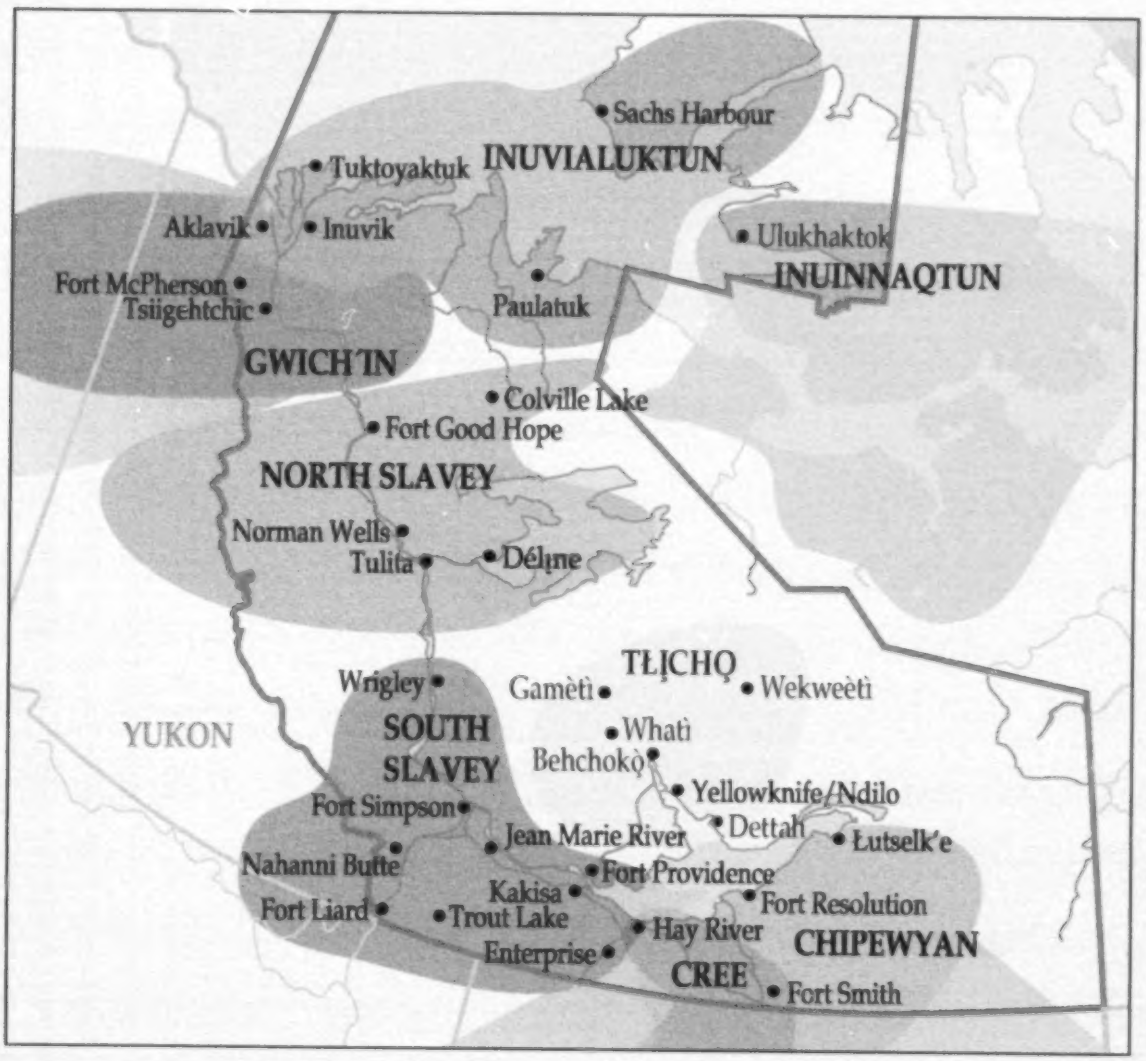
1. LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

1. WHERE LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN

An incredible diversity of languages has persisted in the Northwest Territories (NWT) from time immemorial to the present day, with new ones being added along the way. This multilingualism forms an important part of our identity and our unique heritage.

The NWT is the only jurisdiction in Canada that recognizes eleven Official Languages. Nine of these are Aboriginal languages, belonging to three different language families: Dene, Inuit and Cree. The other Official Languages are English and French.

The majority of the Dene languages spoken in the NWT belong to the Athapaskan family of languages. Chipewyan (Denesuline), Tlicho, Gwich'in, North Slavey and South Slavey are included in this family. The Dene languages can be heard along a band that stretches from the southeast to the northwest of the NWT. The Inuit languages recognized in the NWT are Inuvialuktun, spoken in the northwest, Inuinnaqtun spoken largely in the northeast and Inuktitut spoken mostly in Yellowknife. Cree belongs to the Algonquian family of languages. A small number of people, living mostly in the Fort Smith and Hay River area, speak Cree.



II. STATISTICAL REPRESENTATIONS

Official Languages spoken in the NWT

Population by Selected Mother Tongue Languages, NWT, 2011 and 2006				
	2011		2006	
	NUMBER OF PERSONS	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER OF PERSONS	PERCENTAGE
TOTAL SINGLE RESPONSES	**40,500**	**100**	**41,055**	**100**
English	31,380	77.5	31,545	76.8
French	1,075	2.7	975	2.4
Cree Languages	135	0.3	390	0.9
Dene (incl. Chipewyan (Denesuline))	450	1.1	440	1.1
Gwich'in	250	0.6	190	0.5
Inuinnaqtun	90	0.2	55	0.1
Inuvialuktun and Inuktitut	595	1.5	750	1.8
North Slavey*	735	1.8	835	2.0
South Slavey*	1,200	3.0	1,285	3.1
Tlicho (Dogrib)	1,965	4.9	1,950	4.7

*Responses coded to "Slavey" were distributed to North and South Slavey by geography
Source: Table based on information from the NWT Bureau of Statistics, October 2012

Mother tongue is defined as the first language learned at home during childhood and still understood on the date of the census.

According to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, similar to previous years, English remains the predominant mother tongue language in the NWT. In 2011, 31,380 persons stated that English was their mother tongue representing 77.5% of the population representing a slight increase from 2006. Those with French as a mother tongue increased from 2.4% of the population in 2006 to 2.7% in 2011.

The number of persons who had an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue decreased from 5,720 in 2006 to 5,485 in 2011 representing a decline of 4.1%. The population with an Aboriginal language as a mother tongue is highly concentrated in older age categories.

Official Language retention in the NWT

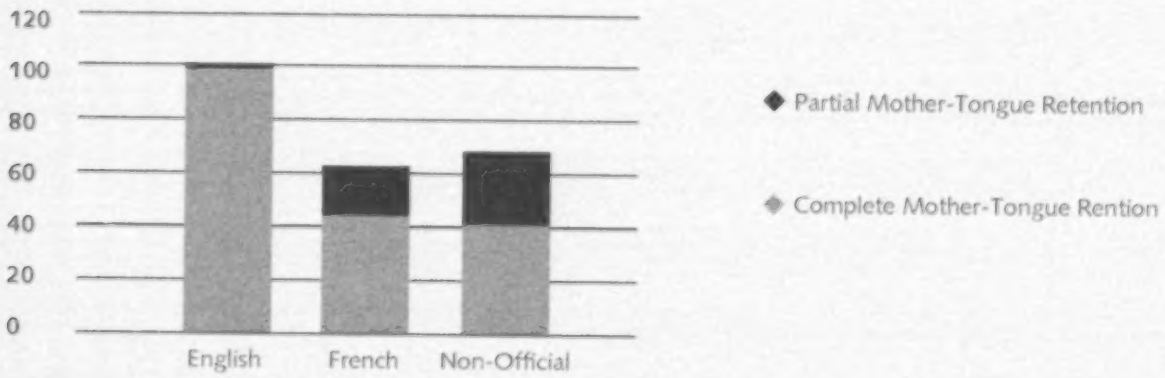
Language retention is generally referred to as the proportion of people who can speak the "first language" of their ethnic group.

Ratio of Home Language to Mother Tongue, NWT, 2011			
	MOTHER TONGUE	HOME LANGUAGE	RATIO
English	31,380	36,480	1.2
French	1,075	550	0.5
Cree Languages	135	20	0.1
Dene (Incl. Chipewyan)	450	170	0.4
Gwich'in	250	35	0.1
Inuinnaqtun	90	20	0.2
Inuktitut	190	45	0.2
Inuvialuktun	405	80	0.2
North Slavey*	715	315	0.4
South Slavey*	1,190	510	0.4
Tlicho (Dogrib)	1,965	1,205	0.6

Source: Table based on information from the NWT Bureau of Statistics, October 2012

As depicted in this table, language retention may be characterized by the ratio of home language to mother tongue. If the ratio is greater than 1, then the language may be considered relatively healthy. By contrast, if the ratio is less than one, the language is showing signs of degradation. In 2011, with the exception of English, all languages are indicating a ratio less than 1. This dynamic is further depicted in the chart below.

Mother-Tongue Retention in the NWT



Source: Census, 2011, Statistics Canada

As the last census demonstrates, the NWT's non-English Official Languages are showing signs of both decline in terms of total numbers and degradation in terms of frequency with which these languages are used in the home. Targeted action by individuals, households, communities and government institutions will be needed to reverse this trend.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR OUR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

I. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

30 years ago, the Legislative Assembly passed the first *Official Languages Act* of the Northwest Territories (OLA). This Act was largely modeled on the federal *Official Languages Act* and had two main purposes: 1) provision of a guarantee of equal status for the use of English and French by members of the public using government programs and services; and, 2) recognition of the use of Aboriginal languages in the NWT.

Years later, the Legislative Assembly enacted several amendments to the OLA in order to give greater status to Aboriginal languages in the NWT. Many of these amendments came into force in 1990. Recognition of the official status of the Aboriginal languages was intended to preserve and promote Aboriginal cultures through the protection of their languages. This same slate of amendments saw the creation of the first Office of the Official Languages Commissioner of the NWT.

II. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The Act establishes 11 languages as the Official Languages of the NWT:

Chipewyan (Denesuline)
Cree
English
French
Gwich'in
Inuinnaqtun
Inuktitut
Inuvialuktun
North Slavey
South Slavey
Tlicho

PEACE AND STRENGTH FROM OUR PAST: REGIONAL HERITAGE FAIR, PRINCE OF WALES NORTHERN HERITAGE CENTRE

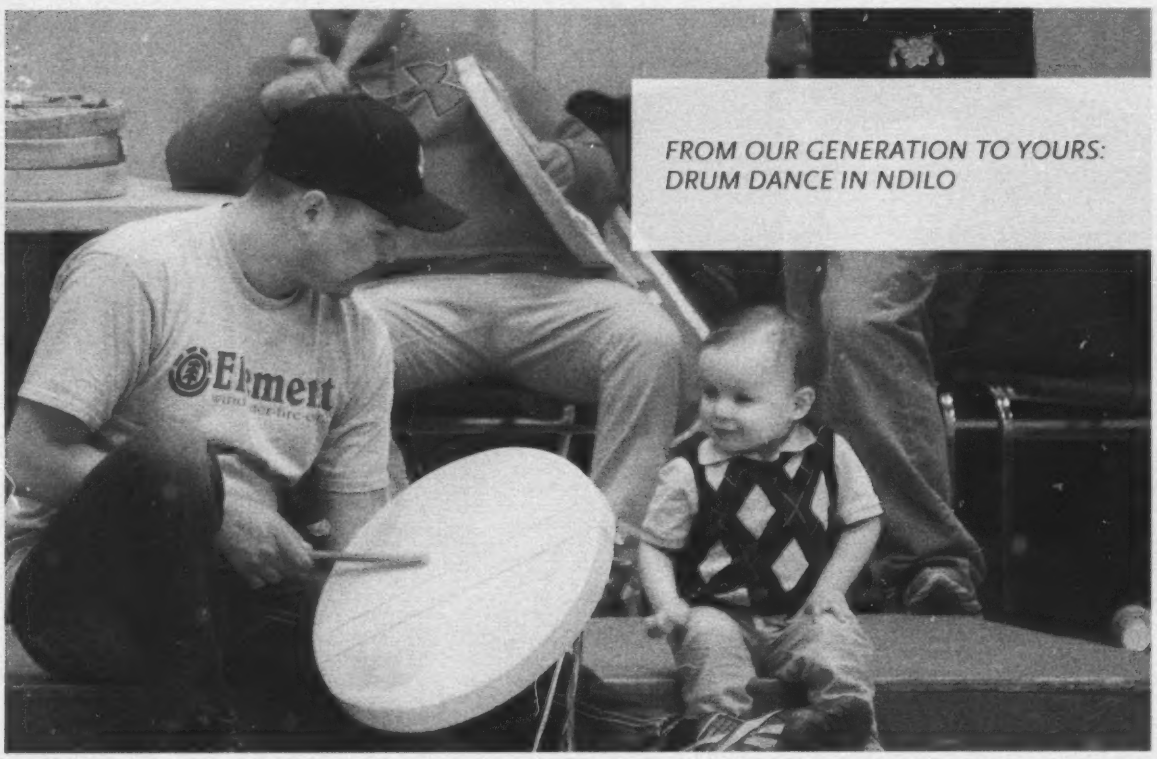
To the extent outlined in the Act, these languages have equality of status and equal rights and privileges regarding their use in all government institutions. The Act addresses certain specific circumstances where language rights may be engaged:

- Court proceedings and judgements
- Debates of the Legislative Assembly
- Statutes and Regulations
- Instruments directed to the public
- Communications and services with government institutions

The Act also identifies certain public bodies that may have obligations with respect to official language rights:

- The Legislative Assembly
- Department or Ministry
- Agency
- Board
- Commission
- Corporation
- Office

Individuals are encouraged to ask questions about the Official Language rights to which they may be entitled. Individuals may direct questions to the Languages Commissioner or a relevant public body.



FROM OUR GENERATION TO YOURS: DRUM DANCE IN NDILO

3. YOUR LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

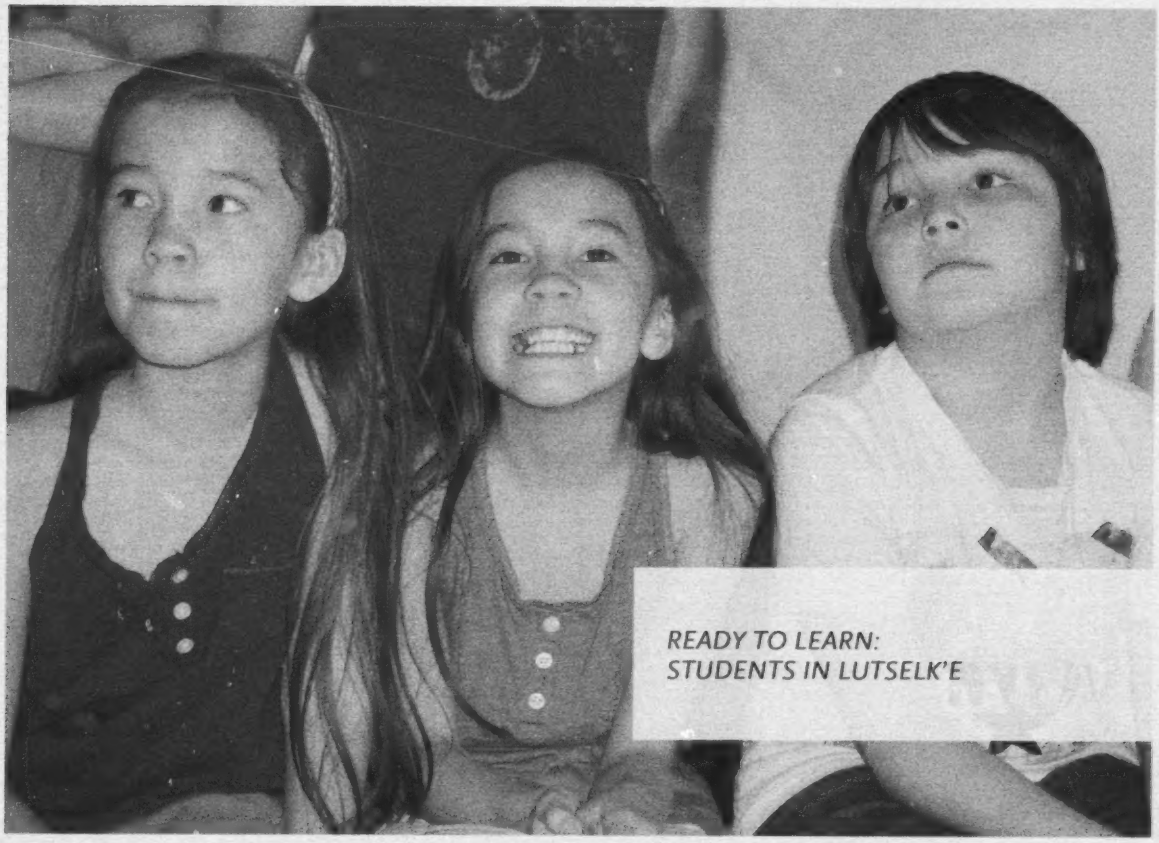
I. HOW THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER IS APPOINTED

Under the *Official Languages Act*, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories must appoint a Languages Commissioner on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly. A Languages Commissioner serves for a term of four years. The Act recognizes the importance of the Commissioner's role in the protection of language rights. For example, if the Languages Commissioner cannot, for some reason, perform her duties, an acting Languages Commissioner is appointed. The Act is structured so that there is always a functioning Languages Commissioner in place.

II. WHAT THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER DOES

The Official Languages Commissioner has significant responsibilities. The Act describes the duty of this Office:

> It is the duty of the Languages Commissioner to take all actions and measures within the authority of the Languages Commissioner with a view to ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the Official Languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of this Act in the administration of the affairs of government institutions.



READY TO LEARN: STUDENTS IN LUTSELK'E

To fulfill this duty, the Languages Commissioner has four main functions:

1. **Investigate and study:** The Languages Commissioner receives, reviews, and investigates Official Languages complaints and inquiries that fall within her jurisdiction.

2. **Promote:** The Languages Commissioner provides information to the public on the language rights framework and on the functions and processes of the Office.

3. **Manage:** The Languages Commissioner and her officers conduct all tasks necessary to effectively run the office.

4. **Recommend and report:** The Languages Commissioner provides objective, independent analysis and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. The Languages Commissioner also prepares and submits Annual Reports on the activities of the Office.

Activities performed under these four main functions are outlined in sections below.

III. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN INDEPENDENT OFFICER

While the Languages Commissioner reports to and is financially supported by the Legislative Assembly, the Languages Commissioner is an independent officer. This means the Languages Commissioner has the authority to investigate the performance of departments, agencies, boards, other commissions, crown corporations and the Legislative Assembly and report objectively about what he or she discovers through that process.

4. 2013-2014 BUDGET OF THE NWT LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

Office of the Languages Commissioner, Fiscal Year 2013-2014, At March 31, 2014

	2013-2014 MAIN ESTIMATES	2013-2014 EXPENDITURES	FREE BALANCE
Compensation and Benefits	55,000.00	51,377.58	3,622.42
	55,000.00	**51,377.58**	**3,622.42**
Travel and Transportation	19,000.00	18,278.49	721.51
Materials and Supplies	28,000.00	3,647.75	24,352.25
Purchased Services	39,000.00	35,585.67	3,414.33
Utilities	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contract Services	100,000.00	78,975.60	21,024.40
Fees and Payments	5,000.00	20.65	4,979.35
Other Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Controllable Assets	0.00	284.90	-284.90
Computer Hardware and Software	2,000.00	3,007.95	-1,007.95
	193,000.00	**139,801.01**	**53,198.99**
	248,000.00	**191,178.59**	**56,821.41**

5. 2013-2014 WORK OF THE NWT LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

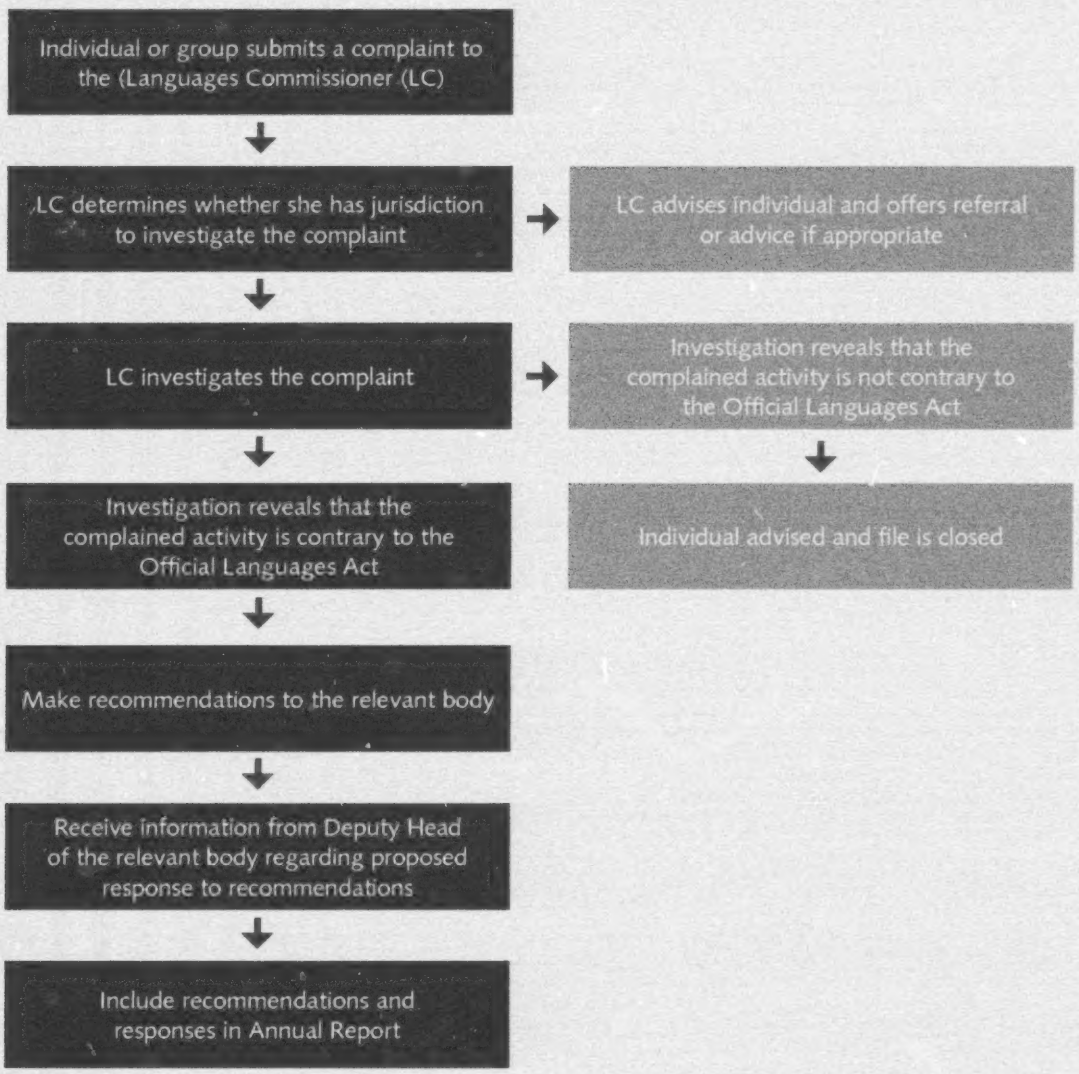
I. INVESTIGATE AND STUDY: HEARING YOUR CONCERNS

COMPLAINTS

A **complaint** involves a situation where a person or group feels that their languages rights or privileges have been infringed or denied and brings the matter to the attention of the Languages Commissioner. They may feel that they have been treated unfairly or have been adversely affected by a policy, program, action or lack of action. In order for the Languages Commissioner to be able to investigate a complaint, she must first determine that she has jurisdiction over the issue.

If the Languages Commissioner undertakes an investigation, she may consult with the Deputy Head of the relevant body in addition to making her own observations about the complained situation. If the investigation reveals that a government department, agency, board or the Legislative Assembly has not upheld the spirit and intent of the *Official Languages Act*, the Languages Commissioner may make recommendations to the relevant body. The Languages Commissioner may also monitor implementation of the recommendations she has made.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS

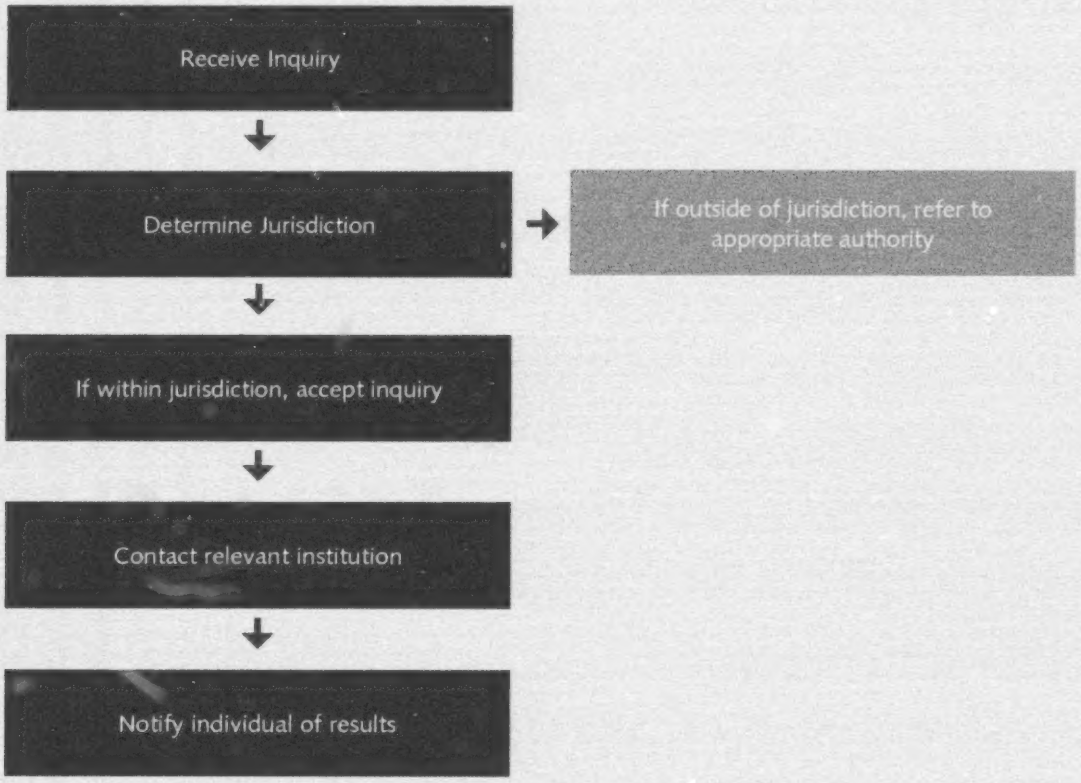

Individual or group submits a complaint to the (Languages Commissioner (LC)
LC determines whether she has jurisdiction to investigate the complaint
LC advises individual and offers referral or advice if appropriate
LC investigates the complaint
Investigation reveals that the complained activity is not contrary to the Official Languages Act
Investigation reveals that the complained activity is contrary to the Official Languages Act
Individual advised and file is closed
Make recommendations to the relevant body
Receive information from Deputy Head of the relevant body regarding proposed response to recommendations
Include recommendations and responses in Annual Report

INQUIRIES

Any member of the public may make an **inquiry** to the Languages Commissioner. An inquiry is a simple request for information from a member of the public. The request could relate to any aspect of Official Languages in the NWT. Inquiries do not, however, involve complaints about unfair treatment.

As with the investigation of complaints, the Languages Commissioner may consult with the relevant government institution and may undertake her own observations about the program, service or communications complained of. She may also make recommendations on the basis of the information learned during the inquiry process. Finally, the Languages Commissioner may refer the individual who submits the inquiry to another authority where applicable. The Languages Commissioner may monitor implementation of the recommendations made.

INQUIRY PROCESS


Receive Inquiry
Determine Jurisdiction
If outside of jurisdiction, refer to appropriate authority
If within jurisdiction, accept inquiry
Contact relevant institution
Notify individual of results

COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES IN 2013-2014

PROFILES OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS

Four language-related concerns were emailed or mailed to the Office. Eight language-specific concerns were also placed with the Office via telephone. Three communications originated from the South Slave Region, three originated from the North Slave Region, five came from the Dehcho Region and one from out the jurisdiction.

TREATMENT OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints lodged with the Office of the Languages Commissioner in the 2013-2014 have been addressed in accordance with the Office's complaints guidelines previously developed. Four complaints proceeded through the initial review and investigative phases. One complaint was referred to a Special Languages Commissioner for review due to a possible conflict of interest. In accordance with the *Official Languages Act*, outcomes of

the investigative process, including recommendations made, will be reported in the 2014-2015 Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly. These complaints are depicted in the table below.

	Location	Complaint / Inquiry	Official Language	Subject	Source
1	North Slave	Complaint	Chipewyan (Denesuline)	Legislation	Individual
2	North Slave	Complaint	French	Public services	Individual
3	South Slave	Complaint	Chipewyan (Denesuline)	Public services	Individual
4	North Slave	Complaint	Aboriginal Languages	Commercial services	Individual

II. PROMOTE: LEARNING AND TEACHING LANGUAGE RIGHTS

Since being appointed to the Office of the Official Languages Commissioner in December 2013, I have used every opportunity to improve my understanding of the NWT's many language communities and my effectiveness as a commissioner. I have also employed every chance to teach people about the different ways the Office can assist in ensuring the recognition of their language rights.

In **January 2014** I traveled to Inuvik to meet past Official Languages Commissioner, Ms. Sarah Jerome, and to transition the office from Inuvik to Yellowknife. While I was unable to meet with Ms. Jerome, I successfully closed the office. Also in January, I met with Rick Letourneau, President of the Francophone Association in order to establish contact and open the lines of communication. I have been fortunate to attend many impressive cultural events over these first few months of my term.

In **February 2014**, I was pleased to have been invited to make a presentation to visiting Parliament interns at the Legislative Assembly. I was also pleased to have been given the opportunity to present to the teachers at St. Patrick's regarding experiences at residential school and its effects on the second generation.

LEARNING:
MILDRED HALL CULTURAL DAY

I also held a teleconference with Nunavut Languages Commissioner, Sandra Inutiq. The purpose of this discussion was to gain insights into the operations of another Languages Commissioner's Office and to gather ideas on how to make this office more effective. Over the course of the conversation, we engaged in an in-depth exchange of operational, investigatory and promotional best practices.

In **March 2014** I focused on promoting of the role of the Office. I provided interviews to several news outlets and placed an informational ad in *Up Here* magazine in order to explain how the Office could assist individuals with their Official Language concerns.

In March I was also honoured to be invited to attend the Dene Leadership meeting in Dettah. I was impressed by the care and concern the participants voiced for their language; and, I was delighted to be able to share information about the role of the Official Languages Commissioner. Finally, I was pleased to attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission event in Edmonton.

III. MANAGE: IMPROVING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE OFFICE

The duties of the Languages Commissioner cannot be fulfilled in isolation. In order to do my part to ensure respect for our Official Languages, I need to be part of the community, connecting with individuals and groups who are concerned about their language rights. I believe that an important part of this is creating a virtual and physical space in which people feel welcome and secure in asking questions and conveying their concerns. In 2013-2014, we took steps to create this kind of space.

CONNECTING IN PERSON

The Office of the Official Languages Commissioner moved to Yellowknife at the end of January 2014. We have now established an office on the second floor of YK Centre East and are excited to initiate our open door policy. Members of the public are welcome to share their thoughts or ask questions in person. Individuals are also welcome to sit and review the official languages materials we have on hand. Or, you can just stop in and enjoy a cup of tea.

In 2013-2014, we also undertook a review of the operations and responsibilities of the office in order to determine how we can improve our work in support of the Official Language communities. Over the next fiscal year, we will be working to ensure knowledgeable staff is available to answer questions from the public in an efficient and respectful way.

CONNECTING ONLINE

Today many of us look first to the Internet for our information. It is therefore essential that the Office of the Languages Commissioner have a functioning, current and easily accessible webpage. In 2013-2014, we completed an assessment of our online presence. Upon this review, it was determined that an overhaul of the Languages Commissioner website is needed immediately. It was also observed that social media offers an important opportunity to reach people across the NWT and that this is currently underused.

Over the next fiscal year, we will be redesigning the website. While initially the website will be presented in English, Official Languages information will eventually be made available to all language communities in innovative and intuitive ways, such as through audio/video recordings of members of Official Languages communities. We will also be designing a guideline for our use of social media with respect to Official Languages matters.

6. KEY ISSUES OBSERVED IN THE 2013-2014 YEAR

In these first few months of my term in this Office, several pressing issues have come to light. Aspects of the following have been reported in previous reports. As language preservation, revitalization and promotion is a generations-long project, it is important not to lose heart or to lose sight of our collective goal.

I. LANGUAGE SHIFT AND THE NEED TO TAKE STOCK

According to data from the 2011 census, French and Aboriginal languages in the NWT are showing signs of degradation. As previous reports and impact studies on languages in the NWT have shown, some of responsibility for this kind of language shift can be found at the level of the individual, the household, the community and our government. Education, government services, employment opportunities, media and mass communications, commitment of family members, the status of a language in the community are all factors that impact efforts to preserve and revitalize a language. It is sometimes difficult to know where to dedicate limited resources. There is a need at this juncture for an exchange of knowledge on the health of our languages and of best practices for reversing the decline of many of our Official Languages.

II. ACCESS TO SERVICES THROUGH ACTIVE OFFER

Departments and agencies across the GNWT have developed and instituted innovative methods for delivering services in the official languages. Reaching this point is no small feat and those who have been committed to this project must be commended. However, real gaps do remain. Active offers of services in the Official Languages are conditions precedent to a functioning system official languages programs and services. Before individuals can activate their language rights, they need to be made aware that they are able to do so. This is the case, in particular, for our elders and youth who may not be familiar with official language rights in the NWT.

SPIRIT AND INTENT: DRUMMERS AT THE TREATY 8 GATHERING IN FORT FITZGERALD

III. AWARENESS OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The Office of the Languages Commissioner is an independent body that is positioned to inspire dialogue and contribute perspectives on official languages matters in a way that other government institutions and individuals cannot. This is what the *Official Languages Act* intends. In order for this system to work, however, individuals must understand how to request the assistance of the Languages Commissioner and the Languages Commissioner must have the ability to respond. In my early engagement with the public, it has become clear that many lack knowledge of their language rights and of the role of the Office. A resource library containing material relating to language rights would contribute a great deal to this. Further, it has become apparent that the Languages Commissioner must be available on a full-time basis, in contrast to the current part-time arrangement, in order to respond to individuals within a reasonable period of time. Any less than this may invite dissatisfaction and frustration.

IV. CONSIDERATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Languages Commissioners have been placing recommendations before government institutions and the Legislative Assembly since the creation of the Office. Further, documents like *Reality Check: Securing a Future for the Official Languages of the Northwest Territories* contain valuable ideas and recommendations for improvement in the way government institutions undertake their language obligations. However, the status of the consideration and implementation of many of these recommendations remains unclear. Unfortunately, this may result in both missed opportunities to support better service delivery and wasted time and resources.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A POSITIVE FUTURE FOR OUR LANGUAGES

RECOMMENDATION 1:

In order to refresh the state of our knowledge on the factors affecting linguistic health in the NWT, the Legislative Assembly should call for a Languages Symposium to be held in 2016. This Symposium would bring together experts from the language, education, communications and other relevant fields as well as language leaders from communities across the NWT. A key outcome for this gathering would include identification of the current factors most influencing language shift and language shift reversal.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Legislative Assembly should direct its own Board of Management and the Government of the Northwest Territories to improve and/or institute an effective system for the active offer of services in the Official Languages, including Aboriginal Official Languages. Underlying this action would be the recognition that such active offers are often the only way individuals learn that they have a right to use their preferred Official Language.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Legislative Assembly should support a truly open and accessible Office of the Languages Commissioner. It is recommended that the Legislative Assembly allocate sufficient funds to employ a Languages Commissioner and two staff persons on a full-time basis so that complaints, inquiries and requests for information from the public may be responded to in a timely way. This would represent an increase from the current arrangement of two persons working half-days. Further, the Legislative Assembly should consider supporting the creation of a library dedicated to language resources. These changes would ensure language rights holders across the NWT are able to effectively access their language rights.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The Legislative Assembly should complete an accounting of all recommendations that previous Languages Commissioners and language-related committees have submitted for its consideration over the past five years. The Legislative Assembly should list these and report to the public on how the Legislative Assembly has decided to treat these recommendations. The Legislative Assembly should also identify which recommendations it will be pursuing over the next five years.

9. HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

IN-PERSON

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CANADA

BY MAIL

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